

Henceforth our regular items 'What's on Today, Tomorrow', 'Weather', 'Here & There' will be published on Page 8.

US envoy calls on PM

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Mary Ann Peters called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Ganobhaban official residence in the city yesterday evening, reports ESS.

The envoy apprised the Prime Minister that all preparations have been completed to make her visit to US a fruitful and splendid one.

Peters said the USA treats Bangladesh as a land of opportunity.

She expressed the hope that the visit of Sheikh Hasina would further cement the Dhaka-Washington relations.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the US Ambassador that Bangladesh has on principle approved Article 192 of the ILO charter and it would be signed within next one and a half months.

She said child labour would be totally eliminated from Bangladesh and steps would be taken for their rehabilitation.

Expressing her satisfaction over the Prime Minister's assurance, Mary Ann Peters said she would convey it to President Bill Clinton.

The envoy expressed deep sympathy over the flooding of the country's south-western districts and said the USA was examining on what help could be extended for this purpose.

Hasina greets Kim

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted President of the Republic of Korea Kim Dae Jung for winning Nobel Peace Prize in recognition to his initiatives for reducing tension and achieving reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula, reports BSS.

In a message to the Korean leader, the Prime Minister said, "I have learned with great pleasure that the Nobel Committee has decided to award your excellency the Nobel Peace Prize for the year 2000."

She said that this is a reflection of the international community's appreciation of your excellency's peace initiative for reducing tension and for achieving reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula.

The Prime minister wished good health and happiness for the Korean leader as well as the well being prosperity of the friendly people of the Republic of Korea.

45 applicants to vie for each JU seat

By JU Correspondent

A total of 31005 admission seekers have submitted application forms to the Jahangirnagar University for 700 first year honours seats for 2000-2001 session.

About 45 applicants will vie for each JU seat this year.

Of the total applicants, 9354 have submitted forms for 'Ka' unit (Science Faculty), 9425 for 'Kha' unit (Social Science Faculty), 5268 for 'Ga' unit (Arts Faculty) and 6958 for 'Gha' unit (Life Science Institute). Yesterday was the last date for submitting admission forms.

The written admission tests for 700 seats in 24 departments under four faculties will be held from October 29 to November 7.

Results of the written tests will be published on December 13, while classes of this session will begin from first week of February, 2001.

Meeting today to overview Satkhira flood situation

An emergency meeting of all cultural activists, artists, litterateurs and intellectuals from Satkhira will be held at 10 am today at 128/Ka, Maghbazar, says a press release.

All interested artists from Satkhira have been requested to attend the meeting to overview and discuss the flood situation in Satkhira.

Those interested to join can also contact the following Tel Nos: 831 4176, 934 4450, 017 520 645, 017 540 556. the release added.

More donation to PM's Relief Fund

Tomod Hermensen, President and Chief Executive of the Norway-based organisation, the Telenor Company, has donated Taka 15 lakh to Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund for flood victims, reports BSS.

Executive Chairman of the Board of Investment (BOI) M Mokammel Haque handed over the cheque to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on behalf of Hermensen at Gano Bhaban last evening.

PSF comes in aid of people's healthcare at Satkhira

By Naimul Haq, back from Satkhira

Almost the entire population in the remote village of Datinakhali, at the foothill of the Sundarbans in Burigonalini union in Satkhira ration drinking water round the year.

The reason is the high salinity of water in the place km from the nearest town - at the foot of the Bay touching the Sundarbans.

There are only a few sources of sweet water ponds, locally known as mitha paani pukur, in the area from where the people fetch drinking water. People from as far as six to seven kilometres from around the ponds walk there each day to collect water. The crisis is acute in summer when the ponds dry up.

Even then the water they collected caused different diseases among the local inhabitants. Stomach ailments are common in this part of the region.

"Bacteria and other germs are always present in open ponds, so it is quite natural to expect high incidences of such diseases," said a health officer. They are also vulnerable to other water borne diseases, he added saying that another reason for diseases among them was their low intake of water.

But not so anymore. To address the crisis NGO Forum through its partner organisation - Nabeek Gonomukhi Shomobay Samity has set up a pond-sand-filter (PSF) for the locals.

The technology is not new but is ideal for the region where people are left with no other choice but drink pond water.

Satiya Ranjan Biswas, Branch Manager of the samity said adding, "PSF filters out all sort of micro-organisms and is cost effective as well."

"I used to walk about a mile everyday to fetch water for drinking and cooking," said



Women crowd around the pond-sand-filter at a sweet water pond to collect the filtered water.

Mina Rani, a housewife standing next to a mitha paani pond holding a kalshi (pitcher). "We only drink the water from this pond yet my children were sick all around the year. They seem to have stomach diseases all the time. Now the situation has improved a lot."

The beneficiaries deposited about 20 per cent of the initial cost of the filter - Tk 24,000. NGO Forum, an apex body of more than 500 NGOs and community based organisations (CBOs) working in the field, provided the financial and technical support.

Since it started about a month ago more people have been coming

to this filter set up by a mitha paani as they realised the benefit of filtered water to their health. It has proved so popular that the local people have appealed to the NGO Forum to set up more pond-sand-filters at other ponds of the region. NGO Forum has already initiated steps to set up three more in the area.

People still have to walk from far with containers to carry back water to their houses, and they still ration the scarce commodity in their houses. But at least they now know that what they are drinking is not harmful to their health.

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Of the total, some four lakh people were given shelter at 380 flood centres, he informed.

After the briefing, the President visited some temporary relief camps at the local BADC godown, Satkhira Government High School and Taltola Primary and High School premises.

He talked to some flood affected people in those camps and enquired about the relief distribution.

While returning to Dhaka, the President also flew over Benapole Land Port and some other floodhit areas and saw the damage, a Gangabhaban press release said.

DRU President M Anwarul Haq was in the chair while its General Secretary Monwarul Islam conducted the programme.

Kibria, who also heads the ruling Awami League's Election

and president of BRPOWA. The paper pointed out that 3,455 children were arrested on various charges since 1990 till date. Of them, only 622 were sent to the correction homes.

The speakers were addressing in a seminar on "Child Rights and Laws Relating to Children and Juvenile Justice" organised by Bangladesh Retired Police Officer Welfare Association (BRPOWA).

If the police change their attitude towards juveniles, it could help improve the juvenile-repression scenario, Nurul Huda, Inspector General of Police who attended the programme as the chief guest said in his speech.

He also said that the court premises no longer remain safe place, adding that child and women repression acts are randomly violated in the country.

The function was presided over by Kazi Anwarul Haq, former Inspector General of Police, former secretary and former minister.

The keynote paper read out by former secretary

Redesign healthcare system

By Staff Correspondent

Laws regarding children in the country are being widely violated due to lack of proper knowledge and unwillingness of law enforcing agencies, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

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